

# WORKERS

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## WHY THE TRAIN AT YOUR PLATFORM IS MAKING MONEY FOR OTHER STATES

JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY



**Guerrilla struggle** How to win on pensions | 06



**Health** The lethal cost of 'free movement' | 11



**Marxist thinking** War and capitalism | 15

IF YOU WANT TO REBUILD BRITAIN, READ ON

# WORKERS

“ A world to win

WE'RE VERY good in Britain at making fun of things. We mock, we scorn – and then we move on. Satire has become safe. But this year has got to be the year we stop mocking the European Union and start the process of leaving it.

Take almost any of the core challenges facing the working class and you see the hand of the EU, from pensions (p6) and transport (p8) to the ludicrous requirement to register doctors and nurses who can't speak English

(p11). The EU's free movement of capital and labour is killing Britain.

There's one good clause in the Lisbon Treaty – the one saying how countries can leave the EU. Let's give the notice of intent it talks about, and start planning a life for our country and our class free of Brussels and the Single Market. It's just 16.5 per cent of world trade, anyway (2009 figures). There's a whole world out there for Britain to trade with: in truth, nothing to lose and a world to win. ■

## The war on Syria has already begun

THE WAR on Syria threatens to become another undeclared war like NATO's attack on Libya. NATO is already secretly involved, with Turkey taking the lead as US proxy.

Turkey's foreign minister has admitted his country is ready to invade as soon as there is agreement among the Western allies. The intervention would be billed as based on the "responsibility to protect" that was used to justify attacking Libya. Turkish sources suggest that they would start by creating a buffer zone along the Turkish-Syrian border.

Unmarked NATO warplanes have been arriving at Iskenderum, near the border, delivering Libyan volunteers and arms seized

from Gaddafi's arsenal. French and British special forces are already on the ground aiding the Syrian opposition, while the CIA is providing communications equipment and intelligence.

The UN report that Assad's forces have killed more than 3,500 civilians is uncorroborated and based largely on rebel sources. Even the CIA has refused to confirm this. Likewise, accounts of mass defections from the Syrian army and pitched battles between deserters and loyal soldiers appear to be fabrications.

When the Syrian government says it is under attack from opponents who are armed, trained, and funded by foreign governments, it's right. ■



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## Contents – February 2012

### News

NHS bill hits huge opposition, p3; Boost for transport, p4; Slump hits print industry, p5; News Analysis: The price of resisting imperialism, p6

03

### Features

Guerrilla struggle: the way forward for the fight on pensions, p6; Alarm signals as foreign state enterprises line up to take over Britain's transport, p8; The deadly cost of the "free movement" of health professionals, p11

06

### Historic Notes

1914: The road to catastrophe, p14

14



<b>NHS</b>	Bill hits huge opposition
<b>PENSIONS</b>	Battle at Unilever
<b>IRAN</b>	Scientist murdered
<b>TRANSPORT</b>	Infrastructure boost
<b>HUNGARY</b>	Outside pressure
<b>EDUCATION</b>	Paying the price
<b>PRINTING</b>	Slump rocks manufacturers
<b>EUROBRIEFS</b>	The latest from Brussels
<b>NEWS ANALYSIS</b>	Perils of fighting imperialism
<b>WHAT'S ON</b>	Coming soon

# NHS bill hits huge opposition

LIKE A SERIES of explosions on a delay button, so the professional organisations spoke out against the Government's Health and Social Care Bill in the third week of January. Professional leaders who had worked with the government during the "listening exercise" moved to a position of total opposition and presented their case in the starkest terms.

First the GPs, the professional group supposedly leading Lansley's reforms. In an on-line poll of doctors, 1,900 out of 2,600 respondents said it was appropriate to pull the legislation even as it wends its way through the House of Lords. When asked if the Royal College of GPs, which represents 44,000 doctors, should call for the bill to be withdrawn jointly with other medical royal colleges, more than 98 per cent of respondents said they "strongly support" or "support" such an action.

The British Medical Association council voted to oppose the bill "in its entirety", telling their members that "chaotic changes and hastily-developed guidance ... appear to be risking the ability of healthcare professionals to lead on commissioning services."

Then the Royal College of Nursing, which for a year and a half has entered into discussion about the reforms, declared it found itself "with no other option than to adopt a position of outright opposition to the Health and Social Care Bill".

At the committee stage of the bill in the House of Lords the RCN worked with Baroness Emerton to lay amendments that would mandate safe staffing levels for nurses and regulation of Healthcare Support Workers. The government rejected these important safeguards and the amendments had to be withdrawn. The RCN also said it was increasingly concerned about "the hitherto unknown consequences of EU competition law, with a real worry that NHS funds will be diverted from funding care to fighting costly law suits."

Cathy Warwick of the Royal College of Midwives put their position succinctly: "Breaking up what we have, embracing the private sector, and injecting full-blown competition and market forces is not what the NHS needs or what health professionals and patients want. We join the growing chorus of voices calling for the bill to be withdrawn, and the proposed reforms stopped in their entirety."

Then on the NHS Managers.net, a senior manager wrote in his blog that NHS managers do not want this and said "they are scared they are being asked to deliver the undeliverable. They are seeing chaos, dissonance, conflict. They are watching the system being ripped-off and are unable to stop it."

On 8 February the report stage in the House of Lords begins. This could be the last time the Lords discuss the NHS plans in detail. Yet this Bill will not be killed in the Lords but by the people, if they so decide. Every worker has been told – the stakes are very high. ■

## PENSIONS

### Strikes hit Unilever

WORKERS AT Unilever have ushered in the new year with a series of strikes to protect their pension fund against changes that would see their pensions drop by between 20 and 40 per cent.

The rolling strikes went from Purfleet in Essex to Trafford Park in Manchester, Port Sunlight on the Wirral to Barnwood in Gloucester, Crumlin in Gwent to Warrington, Cheshire, and from Leeds to Norwich. Action began in December with 2,500 workers, members of USDAW and Unite, striking across the country.

The strikes have hit brands such as Dove, Marmite, PG Tips, Pot Noodle and Hellman's. Unilever's billion-euro brand Lipton Tea, however, is outsourced to Pakistan and the teabags are made by agency staff: not a single directly employed worker is involved in their production. ■

## IRAN

### Scientists murdered

ANOTHER IRANIAN scientist, Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan, has been assassinated in Iran by a car bomb, the fourth Iranian scientist killed in two years.

The US and Israeli governments have declared they will use all means necessary, not excluding military attack, to change the Iranian government. They aim to stop Iran's industrial autonomy, on which the independence of Iran as a country and the freedom of its people depend.

The US is also raising the threat level by sending a nuclear aircraft carrier, destroyers and nuclear submarines into the Persian Gulf and by imposing harsher sanctions on trade, particularly on oil. ■

**If you have news from your industry, trade or profession we want to hear from you. Call us on 020 8801 9543 or email to [rebuilding@workers.org.uk](mailto:rebuilding@workers.org.uk)**

## EUROBRIEFS

## The latest from Brussels

**Giving it away**

IT HAS been revealed that in 2010 Britain's gross contribution to the EU was £18.46 billion, more than 5 per cent up from 2009. Our net contribution is rising even faster. It has risen to £10.3 billion in 2010 from £6.6 billion the year before, when the Labour government gave up our rebate. For £10 billion we could have around 65 new hospitals (£150 million each).

**We want a referendum**

AN ICM poll for the SUNDAY TELEGRAPH found that 59 per cent of respondents want a referendum on the EU by the end of the next parliamentary term in 2015 or sooner. And 35 per cent are in favour of a referendum within one year.

**Falling short**

THE 17 eurozone members have fallen 50 billion short of the EU's 200 billion euro target contribution to the IMF. Britain and other countries refused to commit the 30 billion euros they were asked for. And 200 billion euros would not be enough anyway. Italy alone needs 300 billion for refinancing this year.

**Exposed**

THE EUROPEAN Central Bank's exposure to weaker eurozone economies has now reached 705 billion euros, up from 444 billion euros only six months ago. The reason: the ECB has had to buy government bonds and provide cash for banks to operate.

**VAT attack**

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION wants to scrap VAT exemptions on children's clothes, food, travel, books, newspapers and other goods, adding 20 per cent to the cost of those items in Britain.

**Pensions ploy**

THE EU plans to extend Solvency II, a 2009 Directive on capital requirements for occupational pension schemes allegedly meant to lower their insolvency risk. It is also trying to increase the number of schemes operating across borders, rare at the moment. The new capital requirements could completely kill off Britain's occupational pensions (something the EU has long had in its sights), costing the funds between £250 and £500 billion and introducing a different model of financing. ■



Photo: Andrew Wiard/www.andrew-wiard.com

Agency workers have no legal protection against blacklisting by multinational firms, according to a decision in the Central London Employment Tribunal on Friday 20 January. The court found that engineer Dave Smith (centre) had been blacklisted because he raised concerns about asbestos on building sites and because of his trade union activities. Firms actually admitted that their managers had supplied the malicious information in Dave Smith's blacklist file (collated by the Consulting Association) in a signed statement to the court. Evidence given under oath shows that spies attended union meetings and gathered information about people outside work. Ex-police officer Dave Clancy, Head of the Investigations Team at the Information Commissioners Office, and the man who led the raid on the Consulting Association premises and who discovered the blacklist, said, "There is information on the Consulting Association files that I believe could only be supplied by the police or the security service."

## Boost for transport

BRITAIN'S CREAKING transport industries received encouraging news last month. First, the government announced its decision to go ahead with the first phase of HS2, the high-speed railway from London to Birmingham, with later branches to be built, one to Manchester, and one to Sheffield and Leeds. Only days after the HS2 decision, the government said it would look seriously at a new London airport in the Thames Estuary.

It is understandable that those directly affected would be unhappy with such decisions. Many before them have had the experience of finding out they were in the path of or near to a new or upgraded airport, road, railway, power station or other essential infrastructure development, but have had to accept these developments for the greater good.

Such projects, the reasons for them and the sites chosen for their construction need careful thought. Similarly, we need to ensure that it is British expertise and British workers carrying out the projects. Areas of outstanding natural beauty open for all to enjoy should of course be protected and it is a matter for debate how best this can be done: tunnelling is certainly one solution. Rail is far less damaging to the environment than road transport, and airports probably cause the worst transport-related noise pollution.

So if we really need a new airport, any plan to build it where the planes will take off and land over water must be taken seriously. The fact that Boris Johnson is mayor is not a good reason to oppose an airport dubbed "Boris Island", something that the London Labour Party should think about.

These projects are a response to the fact that old infrastructure has reached its capacity. Both Heathrow Airport and the West Coast Main Line railway are essential transport arteries that are clogged. Very large sums of money have already been spent on trying to enlarge their capacities, but it is clear to most that further expansion of both would be a short-term stopgap measure.

With the huge increase in aviation, other major cities around the world have recognised the need for new modern airports and built them. Most of western Europe now has a network of high speed railways. All Britain has now is a short fast rail line out of the country!

Just as we need energy to develop Britain, we need modern transport infrastructure. The two go hand in hand. Just as we need the state to invest in new power stations, we need the state to build new railways, new airports, and yes, even new roads. But with the mass of people, the working class, in control of the decisions. ■

**EDUCATION****Paying the price**

AS WORKERS went to press, it emerged that Devon has entered into a £125 million, seven-year contract with Babcock International to provide services to schools. The move will surely cause concern for teachers, parents and students in Devon, who will be wondering what price they will have to pay for the outsourcing of this service to a contractor seeking profit.

Evidence from elsewhere in the country suggests this kind of development has little to recommend it in terms of improved performance (the recently reversed 10 year experiment in Bradford with Serco springs to mind), and is more to do with a government drive to replace collective provision, local authorities, with fragmented, individualised provision via

academies, free schools, and here, outright privatisation.

But there is a greater significance than the dissolution of education, and that is the destruction of manufacture. Babcocks, a name once synonymous with engineering and boiler making, now plies its trade in the "services" sector, selling its capacity to manage, rather than make.

- The Department of Education has announced that of the 600 proposed "free" schools, 155 are already extant, fee-paying schools. It has not explained how former selective schools are to adjust their admissions criteria or how their costs are to be altered. For example, average funding for state-maintained secondary schools in Bradford is approximately £6,000 per child. Bradford Girls' Grammar School, which proposes to become a "free" school, currently charges fees of up to £11,000 per year. ■

# Slump hits print industry

THE PRINTING industry has been experiencing difficulties for the past few years due to over-capacity, rising raw material costs and above all the general stagnation of the economy. The new year has started badly for the web offset sector as three big players have announced wage and job cuts.

Polestar, the magazine printer, has announced the closure of its Colchester factory, which employs 300 staff, and more job cuts over the rest of the group. The Wyndeham Group is laying off 85 staff at its Essex factory. And BGP, which employs 570 workers, has asked staff to vote on a pay cut of 20 per cent across the group.

Unite national officer Steve Sibbald describes the opening week of 2012 as "probably one of the worst we've ever had". The union has condemned the BGP company ballot as illegal and urged its members to resist pay cuts. Sibbald says, "The problem in the sector isn't wages, it's over-capacity. Everybody at BGP, Polestar and Walstead could take a 50 per cent pay cut, but that isn't going to create more work. At the moment the web-offset sector is just subsidising publishers at the cost of the staff."

The problems of the industry affect even the mighty German engineering sector. One of the world's biggest printing press manufacturers, ManRoland, has given up the ghost, affecting its 6,000 staff worldwide. Sales have halved since 2006. Meanwhile, its competitor Heidelberg, also based in Germany, has seen its sales fall by a third, prompting big lay-offs and factory closures. Heidelberg shares, which traded at a high of 45 euros, now sell for 1.50 euros. ■

**HUNGARY****Outside pressure**

THE EUROPEAN Union has stepped up pressure on Hungary over the country's refusal to implement austerity policies and threatened legal action over its new constitution. The pressure was met with a furious demonstration on 22 January in the capital, Budapest, that drew more than 100,000 people in support of the government, according to news reports.

The threats of legal action from the European Commission are escalating the stand-off between Budapest and the European Union, as Hungary negotiates

fresh financial aid from Europe and the International Monetary Fund.

Over the past months, the country's credit rating has been cut to junk by all three major rating agencies, unemployment is 10.6 per cent and the country may be facing a recession.

But bailout negotiations between Hungary and the European Union/International Monetary Fund broke down after the Hungarian government refused to cut public spending and Hungarian lawmakers implemented a new constitution reasserting political control over its central bank. European treaties demand that central banks remain independent of governments. ■

**WHAT'S ON****Coming soon****February**

Wednesday 15 February, 7.30pm.  
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. Nearest tube Holborn.

**"Trade Unions – Dead or Alive?"**

The press continually carry the obituaries of trade unions. Yet they survive, as organic and necessary to the working class as the air we breathe. But what state are they in? Are they truly alive, or just going through the motions? Can they re-grow, or will workers let them fade away? Come and discuss the future for working class organisation. Everybody welcome.

**THATCHER****Funeral dirges**

BEFORE LABOUR lost office in 2010, Brown, Milliband and others proposed that Margaret Thatcher should receive a state funeral for services to capitalism. This revolting idea has been rapidly distorted by workers with a sense of humour.

Launched on the government's own petition site are three petitions that concern Thatcher. By mid-January nearly 8,000 people strongly objected to a state funeral. But a staggering number, nearly 28,000, supported the idea, though only if it was privatised and her thieving friends in the City paid for it. A pathetic 24 people actually supported the idea of a state funeral.

A hundred thousand signatures are required before the House of Commons Backbench Business Committee has to take note. We already endure films, statues and cult status for this anti-working class nobody. Enough is enough. ■

**WORKING HOURS****Unpaid overtime**

THE LATEST quarterly Labour Force Survey shows that 2 billion hours of unpaid overtime were worked in 2011, which the TUC says is the equivalent of a million full-time jobs.

About 5.3 million workers put in a weekly average of 7.2 hours, worth about £5,300 a year each. Most of the estimated total of £29.2 billion was donated to bosses by workers in London and the South East. The survey found that about one million more workers were working unpaid overtime than in 1992, when data were first collected. ■

## NEWS ANALYSIS

## The perils of resisting imperialism

**WHY ME?** This may well have been the question being posed by both Colonel Gaddafi of Libya and Laurent Gbagbo of Côte d'Ivoire as they came under fire from French and NATO armed forces last year. Both men were removed from power, the first killed and the second forcibly taken to the International Criminal Court at The Hague. The ostensible reason: because both were attacking civilians in their own countries, according to the complicit UN.

This is now a pretext for armed intervention in Syria where, coincidentally, some of the same "civilians" active with weaponry in Libya are now being identified. (Active, as they were in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan and Chechnya.)

What wasn't broadly publicised at the time of Gbagbo and Gaddafi's removal and killing was their joint crime of resisting the imperial ambitions of the USA and the EU. Gbagbo, for whatever reasons, had come around to adopting a public opposition to the continuation of the West African CFA franc as his country's currency, and had its removal as part of his election programme.

The West African CFA – originally "Colonies françaises d'Afrique" ("French African colonies"); now Communauté financière d'Afrique ("Financial Community of Africa") – is a trading agreement and monetary arrangement covering eight countries in the region. Gbagbo wanted to take Côte d'Ivoire out of the CFA as it permanently cedes power over a nation's currency to France and the eurozone. In this way, France decides what's produced, what's traded and what the terms of trade are for the eight countries and their relations with France.

French president Sarkozy couldn't countenance this challenge, so his 2,500 troops sent to interfere in the election captured Gbagbo and whisked him out of the country, leaving the more compliant Alassane Ouattara in control.

### The big mistake

Across the continent, Gaddafi had made the mistake of saying "no" to the Mediterranean Basin Alliance, an imperialist trading scheme dreamt up by the EU at the Barcelona Conference in 1995. Under the scheme, North African countries enter into unfavourable relations with the EU and trade at a disadvantage. Morocco has been tied into the scheme for a number of years and will no doubt be in someone's sights for breaking the terms by kicking EU fishing fleets out of its territorial waters.

Instead, Gaddafi had pursued the creation of a Pan-African bank, funded by Libyan oil revenues to the tune of £42 billion. A number of countries from South Africa to Sudan were interested in this scheme that would have allowed for African-funded investment in industry and equal terms of trade. With China becoming increasingly influential across the continent of Africa the EU and USA are concerned that those countries in thrall to western finance should remain so.

Thus Gaddafi, who only two years ago was still being praised for "coming in from the cold", had to go. ■

If the resistance to the government's what each section of workers wants and needs and strengths. It is not, and ne

## Guerrilla struggle: the w

THE GOAL of the two million strong 30 November strike was to get the government to enter into meaningful negotiations and discussions over public sector pensions. It made its point strongly, showing that passions about the pensions issue run high across a huge swathe of public services. Now, negotiations affecting the major schemes – teachers, civil servants, local government workers, health workers – plus the smaller specialised schemes, are in the offing, especially in health and local government.

30 November showed powerfully what unites us. It always had to be followed by a more guerrilla and protracted approach, where the various sections involved in the numerous (and different) pensions schemes fight on their own ground. And that is just what is happening. There is no cause for wailing and gnashing of teeth because it's where we should be. The relative strength or weakness of each sector is becoming apparent and will be further exposed. Each must fight according to its strength.

Unison and the GMB, whose members comprised over 1.25 million of those who struck, have accepted a Heads of Agreement framework for negotiation. Both unions have agreed that there will be no further action until those negotiations are concluded, and until an offer, if one emerges, is put to their members. The mandate for industrial action remains live but is parked for the moment.

Other unions are undecided or do not believe that the Heads of Agreement provides any framework for negotiation. Some posture, saying it is better to have an imposed and far worse deal than try to steer the government in another direction. Some clamour for neither peace nor war, neither advance or retreat but just mouth slogans as though chanting a mantra will fix the situation.

### Strength and weakness

So far the pensions dispute has been a set piece cul-de-sac battle selected by the government on their terms, but it is not over. The trade unions have struggled to find initiatives or tactical ingenuity to come up with differing options on action they could deliver. In local government the plain fact is that historic areas of strength, which in the past were used for selective action, are now removed from the trade dispute. Vast swathes of the public sector have been outsourced and privatised – hence removing those workers from the dispute.

Others have seen union density eroded because the hard work of recruiting and sustaining union workplace organisation was ignored during the years of the last Labour government. Easier to pursue the soft win victories of legislation aimed at equalities and legal redress than to battle day in day out to win over workers' minds. Easier to play at merger games, promoting business and managerial unionism, rather than organise the workplaces.

The sheer difficulty of running a legal ballot and holding a legal trade dispute permeates every trade union, leading to paralysis. For every organiser, negotiator, or strategist at the table there are a several lawyers present and "advising".

There are those in the unions who are intent on engineering a split between the unions over an ultra-left agenda, opposed by those who are tactically astute enough not to be walked into a trap set by the Coalition. There are those who think sloganising replaces organisation and thought-through strategies aimed to win. These strategies begin with the defeat of



plans for public sector pensions is to thrive, it must be based on and their ability to wage a protracted war based on their own ever was, about one solution for everyone...

## Way forward for the fight on pensions

the worst excesses being proposed and including knowing when to retreat in order to be ready to fight another day.

Some cynically see the dispute as an exercise to merge unions, e.g. Unite and PCS, to promote the sectarian and failed politics of the ultra-left. Such a merger would have no workplace root or strategic value to the working class: it would simply feed personality, ego and delusions of power. Those who preach so-called unity, refuse to consult the membership, fail to work to bring non-TUC trade unions such as the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Nursing into our ranks, and clamour for another joint strike date, are the real voices of division and defeat.

The negotiations over the schemes will produce differing outcomes and differing possibilities. But this is the nature of guerrilla struggle and opens up the opportunity of mobile rather than positional warfare. It will help shift the mind-set that there is only one answer; a one size fits all solution.

Given that the government started out intending to destroy all public sector pension schemes, it will be a victory when they are forced to concede the continuity of the schemes, whatever difficult decisions workers in those schemes will have to address. It is also heartening to note that the pensions fight is alive in the private sector, where Unilever workers are taking industrial action over plans to downgrade their pension scheme.

### Clarion call

So despite all the shortcomings within the unions, 30 November 2011 was a clarion call “warts and all”, which went right across Britain and coincided with an upsurge in the hatred towards the EU. Note that since then the Coalition and the quisling Scottish National Party have sought to put the question of Britain’s division on to the front burner. They fear organised British workers, and 30 November showed the beginnings of what a united British working class can achieve – but the key is still guerrilla struggle without silly “gestures and heroics”.



A Royal College of Nursing banner proudly on display in Sheffield during the 30 November strike. The involvement of non-TUC unions such as the RCN and the British Medical Association will be crucial to the fight for pensions in health.

Photos: Workers

Of course, the EU orders to the British government are to undermine both public and private pension provision by further tightening the already destructive pensions accountancy rules. Unless they are tackled these changes will encourage

companies to further withdraw from pension provision, returning individuals to personalised pensions savings and impoverishing future generations. Unions must revisit their policies towards the EU in the light of this attack. ■

Fed up with poor service and soaring fares, increasing numbers astonishingly, that's what is happening. Except not in the way a

## Alarm signals as foreign state enterprises

Photos (this page and cover: Tupungato/Shutterstock.com



Here comes the state sector: Germany's. Picture shows a DB train in Stuttgart in July 2010, just a month before German State Railways finalised its takeover of Arriva.

AMAZINGLY, MORE and more of Britain's train and bus companies are moving out of the private sector, and into the public sector. Even more incredible is the fact that it is not the British public sector they are joining, but those of France, Germany and the Netherlands.

Last month, in an article on energy supply, WORKERS exposed the fact that German, French and Spanish companies are dominating the British energy market, treating the British people as a captive colonial market. There are notable parallels with the provision of public transport in Britain.

The Netherlands State Railways has just won the franchise to operate services in East Anglia out of London Liverpool Street. DB, the German state railway, has just purchased open access operator

Grand Central which runs train services on the East Coast route from Sunderland and Bradford to London.

Both the above railway companies are now running many of Britain's bus services. In London, they have been joined by RATP, the Paris municipal transport authority. There is seemingly no end to this trend, with French national rail operator SNCF looking to increase its involvement in Britain's railways; both it and the Dutch are shortlisted for in a race to the bottom to take over Virgin's West Coast franchise at the end of 2012. The Danish and Spanish railways are also busy preparing to enter the fray.

So why isn't this takeover of our public transport system by foreign public transport operators more obvious, and widely known about? The answer lies in

the fact that they are using pseudonyms to operate here. SNCF is known in Britain as Keolis, and Dutch State Railways is Abellio. The Germans have taken over British company Arriva, and all their passenger operations are now part of that "division" of DB. It is rumoured that the Spanish will either bid in partnership with or take over another 'British' company National Express, now dominated by Spanish shareholders.

Why is this happening? Principally for two reasons, both associated with the European Union's obsession with the market and "liberalisation".

In the 1990s, the Thatcher and Major governments in Britain zealously encouraged the EU's diktats on breaking up and privatising the railways. These were largely ignored by the rest of Europe.



in Britain are calling for the railways to be re-nationalised. And any worker in Britain would want...

## Line up to take over Britain's transport

Private bus companies that emerged from the breakup of Britain's publicly owned National Bus Company ten years earlier were best placed to take part in the feeding frenzy following rail privatisation, companies like National Express, Stagecoach and First Group.

Meanwhile, western Europe's national railway operators have metamorphosed into giant multi-national transport corporations, preparing for the increasing EU-driven liberalisation of the railways to come. These companies have clearly been made ready for privatisation, but the recent economic crisis has apparently put governments off for now. The relatively small British bus companies are no match for these massive corporations, and it is thought that the takeover of Arriva by DB will be followed by another feeding frenzy as the bus companies are gobbled up by the big rail corporations.

And like the rest, DB is not just interested in railways – it runs buses, trams and metros across Europe, and a huge logistics organisation (DB Schenker) which is the biggest rail freight company in Britain.

### Exporting profits

Recently, it has become clear that the German government has given DB a clear steer that any profits made from its "extra-curricular" activities in Britain and elsewhere are to be used to invest in German railway services. This means British workers travelling on DB's careworn and overcrowded trains here, paying some of the highest fares in Europe, will be contributing to more new trains in Germany!

And DB is certainly ripping off the British passengers. The recent average 6 per cent fares increase authorised by the government disguised some scandalous increases on DB's Cross Country franchise, which runs the length of the country. Not only did they put the prices of ticket types up, but they changed the validity of cheaper walk-on fares. Unless you want to arrive after 7pm in the evening, the Plymouth to Edinburgh standard class return fare rose from £178 to over £350. It has become much cheaper to travel via

**"Most passengers of course don't realise they are travelling with foreign train or bus companies..."**

London for such journeys rather than to take the hourly through service.

Most passengers of course don't realise they are travelling with foreign train or bus companies, hiding behind a convenient pseudonym.

### Threat to buses

Buses are the most frequently used form of public transport, and around 123,000 people are employed in the bus industry. However, government funding cuts are now putting many of Britain's bus services in jeopardy.

The government is cutting 28 per cent of the money it gives to local authorities for public transport, with some rural counties losing perhaps 50 or even 100

per cent of their council-funded bus services. Other councils are cutting all weekend and evening services. In many areas concessionary fares schemes for young people and for free bus pass holders during peak hours are being withdrawn.

The government doesn't have to withdraw free travel for pensioners – there won't be many buses left to use! Council supported bus cuts are being made at a time when commercial bus services are also being hit hard by the cuts.

A 20 per cent cut in the fuel tax rebate for buses will come into force in 2012. This will combine with changes to the formula used by councils to calculate the way companies are reimbursed for carrying bus pass holders. These formula changes will mean another £100 million in funding being lost from the bus network.

In response, Unite and RMT are supporting the Campaign for Better Transport's Save Our Buses campaign.

Not to be outdone by the ConDem government, the SNP-led Scottish

*Continued on page 10*

## Meet the Party

The Communist Party of Britain's new series of London public meetings began on 29 September 2011 and will finish on 14 June; except on May Day, all are held in the Bertrand Russell room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL, nearest Tube Holborn. Other meetings are held around Britain. All meetings will be advertised in What's On, see page 5.

**M** The theme of the next meeting, on Wednesday 15 February, will be "Trade Unions – Dead or Alive?". Details of further meetings will be announced in WORKERS and at [www.workers.org.uk](http://www.workers.org.uk).

**M** The Party's annual London May Day rally is always held on May Day itself, regardless of state bank holidays – in 2012, Tuesday 1 May, in Conway Hall, Holborn. There will also be May Day meetings elsewhere in the country.

**M** As well as our regular public meetings we hold informal discussions with interested workers and study sessions for those who want to take the discussion further. If you are interested we want to hear from you. Call us on 020 8801 9543 or e-mail to [info@workers.org.uk](mailto:info@workers.org.uk)



*Continued from page 9*

'government' has issued a consultation paper on the future of Scotland's railways that seems to be trying to outdo the sort of draconian measures envisaged in the McNulty "Value for Money" report published last year, which the Westminster government is still considering.

It envisages breaking up the existing Scotrail franchise to allow operators to milk the profitable routes, operators like Stagecoach whose leader Brian Souter has donated millions of pounds to the SNP. Future private franchisees would have carte blanche to set whatever fare levels they wish on these routes and to introduce smartcards, which will undoubtedly rip off Scottish travellers as they have in London.

Stations could be destaffed, outsourced, or closed altogether. Scottish sleeper services could face the axe. Guards would be removed from trains, and ticket offices closed.

The more barmy suggestions are that services from England be forced to terminate at Edinburgh instead of providing through trains to Inverness, Aberdeen and Dundee, and that stations

will not need toilets or washrooms if the trains stopping at that station have those facilities.

The RMT has commented that "it is worth noting that all of these additional concessions are being proposed for a franchise that paid dividends of £18 million in 2010, £18 million in 2009, £17 million in 2008 and £21 million in 2007. In two of these years Scotrail actually paid more in dividends than it made in profit, leading to the obvious conclusion that because it does not contribute anything towards investment in the railway or rail infrastructure, and with the level of government subsidy even covering its track access charges, it is simply asset stripping Scotland's railway. The proposals from the Scottish Government allow for the intensification of this theft."

### **Bombardier**

The government has at least given a stay of execution to the threatened last train-building factory in Britain, Bombardier's Derby plant. Exactly 1,000 days after the last firm train order was made, Bombardier received an order for 130 new electric train vehicles, worth £188 million. This work will

**"In two years Scotrail actually paid more in dividends than it made in profit..."**

keep the much reduced workforce going for nearly two years, but is a fraction of the Thameslink order for 1,300 vehicles that would have secured the long-term future for Derby.

The Thameslink contract has still not been signed with preferred German bidder Siemens, and has become more and more mired in controversy. The RMT recently demanded that the government reverse the decision to award Siemens the contract after it emerged that their bid was priced in euros. With the 10 per cent decline in the value of the currency since tendering, the cost to the British taxpayer on the £1.4 billion contract has soared by £140 million.

The fight continues to defend Britain's train manufacturing capacity. ■



## **CPBML/Workers Public Meeting, London Wednesday 15 February, 7.30 pm "Trade Unions – Dead or Alive?"**

Bertrand Russell Room, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. Nearest tube Holborn.

The press continually carry the obituaries of trade unions. Yet they survive, as organic and necessary to the working class as the air we breathe. But what state are they in? Are they truly alive, or just going through the motions? Can they re-grow, or will workers let them fade away? Come and discuss the future for working class organisation. Everybody welcome.

**Obsessed by its Single Market, the European Union has been forcing us to accept onto Britain's health registers doctors and nurses who can't speak English...**

## The deadly cost of "free movement"

MOST PEOPLE in Britain will remember the case of the German doctor Dr Daniel Ubani, who came over to Britain to do a "moonlight shift" for an agency and because of his limited English language skills gave a morphine overdose which killed his patient. On his first "out of hours" NHS shift on February 16, 2008, he gave 70-year-old David Gray up to 20 times the recommended dose of diamorphine, killing him within hours.

Yet few people appreciate that the reason he was able to work in this way was a result of EU Directive 2005/36/EC called the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (MRPQ). Probably even fewer know the EU is proposing to review this directive with a view to relaxing the controls even further, and the coalition government is falling over itself to lead the way.

Here is the opening paragraph of the government's response to the EU review published in September 2011:

"The modernization of the Professional Qualifications Directive comes at a crucial time in the economies of the EU. Decreasing public budgets and difficult economic circumstances cast new light on systems which originate from past decades, and create urgency to ensure that these systems do not hinder economic growth. We therefore welcome the review of the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC), as one of the European Commission's 12 levers to boost growth in the single market."

The systems which "originated in past decades" are the accumulated experience of professionals, their professional bodies and trade unions, which have fought to improve and maintain standards, often standards related to the safety of the public they were serving.

### Mutual recognition

The MRPQ is a fundamental component of the Single Market. It allows professionals to have their qualifications, obtained in one member state, recognised in another and thus allows them to be employed anywhere within the Single Market



Photo: Workers

**Lack of planning has become a feature of the modern NHS. Above: doctors in Glasgow protest in March 2007 against a system as described as "complete chaos" with thousands of expensively trained junior doctors unplaced and without even an opportunity to be interviewed.**

irrespective of where they were trained. The Directive applies to the European Economic Area, which includes EU member states along with Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The Directive was transposed into British law in 2007. There are currently 800 regulated professions across the EU with two systems for recognition of qualifications: the "general system" and "automatic recognition".

The system of automatic recognition applies to seven professions: doctors, dentists, general care nurses, midwives, pharmacists, veterinary surgeons and architects. For these professions there are "harmonized minimum training requirements". Note the word "minimum". Language competency is not viewed as part of this "minimum" requirement – the focus is on clinical and professional skills.

Yet most clinical skills – the taking of temperature, blood pressure and so on – require language competency if only to seek the patient's consent before doing the procedure. Failure to do so could make the procedure legally an assault.

Most of the professions are covered by the "general system". In this instance the

directive allows that where there are "substantial differences" in training requirements between member states the host country "may impose compensation measures, requiring the applicant either to complete an adaptation period or take an aptitude test." One of the main reasons that the EU now wishes to review the 2005 Directive is that so many professions have been adept at defending their standards.

From the perspective of the EU commission, the directive has been a success, but they view the current mobility of professionals within the EU as too low. In their own estimation intra-EU trade in services represents only 25 per cent of overall trade in the EU when the services sector represents 70 per cent of Gross Domestic Product. The commission cites "burdensome and unclear procedures" as one of the main obstacles to EU citizens "exercising their rights to cross borders". However they also acknowledge that there have been particular concerns with regard to cross-border provision where public safety is at stake. This is testament to the

*Continued on page 12*



*Continued from page 11*

efforts by health professionals and others in Britain to raise the alarm.

But the EU is a many-headed hydra. Realising it has been caught out on public safety in health care, it is claiming to put in extra safeguards in this area, using this as a diversion from the more general attack on all professions contained in the Directive.

### Language and public safety

Under the 2005 directive as implemented in English law the requirement to test for language ability rests with the employer and not the regulator of a particular profession.

As reported in *WORKERS* in May 2011, this has led to a situation in health that both professionals and public find incomprehensible and dangerous. For example, whenever an overseas nurse seeks to join the UK nursing register, the regulator can expect them to provide evidence of English language competency equivalent to GCSE English, or undertake the IELTS (International English Language Test) and pass at grade 7.5 both verbal and written – i.e. at a high standard. But only if that nurse is coming from outside the EU, such as Hong Kong or South Africa.

In contrast a nurse or a doctor can come from anywhere in the EU or wider EEA area and join the UK register without any language test. The responsibility for

language testing rests with their employer.

The nursing unions and the regulatory body the Nursing Midwifery Council (NMC) have publicly expressed their concerns about this issue for a number of years. In March 2011 the NMC submitted evidence to the commission on behalf of all 26 nursing regulators across Europe demanding the authority to test language skills prior to putting someone on the register. The chief executive of the Patients Association also raised concerns: “How can we allow Europe to direct something as important as the delivery of safe care, particularly for older people?”

The government says that it should be up to the individual employer to test language competency, but the case of Dr Daniel Ubani shows how risky this can be. The different level of scrutiny between NHS trusts was exposed at the inquest for the patient killed by Ubani. In June 2007 Leeds

Primary Care Trust (PCT) tested Ubani’s language skill and he was told he had not passed the language exam. He had only scored a 6 on the IELTS test, but a mere month later he successfully applied to a different trust for formal registration as a GP. The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly PCT did not bother with a test “because he was an EU doctor”, and placed him on the nationwide performance register. This meant Ubani could work anywhere in England and Wales.

It emerged at the inquest that the out of hours company which used Ubani’s services told him to return to Germany the day after he killed David Gray. Ubani, now 68, has since been suspended by the General Medical Council in Britain but continues to practise in Germany.

### Fitness to practise

Health professionals in Britain are required to demonstrate that they have undertaken a certain amount of continuing professional development each year. But the EU directive again does not allow the regulator to impose this requirement on EU health professionals: it gives this responsibility to individual employers. Dr Ubani was working as an out of hours GP but it emerged at the inquest he had never practised as a GP in Germany. He mainly does plastic surgery work. The Nursing and Midwifery Council recently told a House of Lords committee that it had been “required to register nurses who had not had practice experience within 20 years”. There has been no attempt to rectify this omission in the proposed new version of

## Timetable for EU attack

2005	EU Directive on Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications (MRPQ)
2007	MRPQ transposed into British law
March 2010	EU Commission announces an “evaluation” of the directive
Jan 2011	EU launches a consultation
June 2011	UK Green Paper on Modernising the Professional Qualifications Directive
Sept 2011	UK government response to EU Commission supportive of further relaxation of controls on movement
Jan 2012	Commission’s proposals for change expected
2013	New Directive expected



Photo: Shout/www.reportdigital.co.uk

the directive. Even the British government has had to express concern on this:

“We have heard strong concerns from our partners and stakeholders concerning health professionals seeking recognition who have been out of practice in their home State for a number of years, but then seek to practice in another Member State. The current Directive seems to require competent authorities to register professionals who met minimum training standards some years ago, but have not practiced recently.”

As in the case of Ubani someone struck off in one country can freely practise in another, avoiding the consequences of their malpractice. Dr. Hamish Meldrum of the British Medical Association, speaking in Cardiff in June 2011, reported: “We are aware of several cases where doctors have been removed from the medical register in this country because of fitness to practise problems, but are still practicing elsewhere in the EU. I am afraid EU law seems to put freedom of movement rather higher than protection of patients.”

The only forum that appears to have explored the issue fully (but only in relation to health professionals) is the European Union Committee of the House of Lords. It has published a report with the promising title of “Safety First: Mobility of Healthcare Professionals in the EU”\*. Indeed the introduction to their report states:

“The number of incidents which have occurred as result of failures of the Directive may be considered statistically low but where they have occurred the results have been devastating. Confidence in the Directive, particularly in relation to those professions covered by automatic recognition, has been severely undermined as a result, leading to fear in some quarters that mobility has been prioritised over public safety.”

The House of Lords heard from witnesses including regulatory bodies and Royal Colleges, but sadly none fundamentally questioned the nature of the Directive. This allowed the House of Lords final report to include a Jane Austen type clause that read “It is generally acknowledged that the free movement of services provides benefits for the EU as a whole, for its individual member states and for its citizens. None of our witnesses sought to question this.”

### Alarming

Yet many did raise the issues of language and fitness to practise, and even more alarming information about the registration of health professionals came to light. For example in some regions of Spain there is no formal or compulsory regulatory system for nurses – no register!

The House of Lords response to the commission on health professionals was much more robust than that of the House of Commons. In particular they said in relation to language competency that the current and proposed Directive “strikes the wrong balance between facilitating mobility and ensuring public safety”. They specifically called for regulators to be able to test language competency.

In London the population is predicted to grow by 13 per cent in the next 20 years with the elderly population rocketing by 34 per cent in the same period. But the London Strategic Health Authority, soon to be replaced by a new body, has announced that the number of training places for adult nurses is expected to be reduced by around 420 between 2011/12 and 2012/13, down from 2,000 to 1,580.

In January a nameless Department of

## “A doctor can come from anywhere in the EU and join the UK register without any language test..”

Health spokesperson told NURSING TIMES magazine that a 40 per cent increase in the number of EU nurses joining the UK register from 2010 to 2011 was one reason that fewer students would be needed.

So in the year after nursing in England has moved from Diploma to Degree status, the number of students is slashed and EU nurses (many prepared at sub Diploma level) join the register! The irony was not lost on a string of nurses who commented with fury on the online version of the NURSING TIMES article – including some recently made redundant and third year students struggling to find jobs.

### Fighting back

The current Directive is dangerous. The new version is potentially even more so. See the Box, left, for the timeline of this particular EU attack. As WORKERS goes to press many union branches are preparing motions for conference and if ever a topic needed to be understood and debated, here is one.

We need to emulate the two sons of David Gray who have never stopped campaigning against this system. They have fought relentlessly to have Ubani removed from the register in Germany. Last year Ubani took them to court to try and prevent them speaking up. Ironically the German courts said that the sons could keep speaking up and Ubani could not silence them, but apparently no law in Germany or European court can prevent this negligent doctor practising.

The law is an ass. The wording of this Directive needs to be turned on its head. Professionals in every country should mutually recognise the right of professionals to organise in their own country. ■

\*<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201012/ldselect/ldcom/201/201.pdf>

# The First World War was not a surprise. The events and forces that were festering for decades....

## 1914: The road to catastrophe

WHEN THE First World War broke out on 4 August 1914, it did so against a background of intensifying conflicts and rivalries between the leading capitalist powers. Rival capitalisms were set on a gradual drift towards world conflagration as the differing interests and alliances locked market competitors into opposition and implacable hostility.

Probably the first impulse to general war can be traced back to the Prussian victory over France in 1870. The resulting unification and creation of the German Empire in 1871 led to a change in the balance of capitalist powers in Europe, with Germany now the strongest military might on the continent, possessing large and expanding industrial resources.

Germany annexed Alsace-Lorraine after 1870, throwing the French state into an alliance with Russia, splitting Europe into two opposing camps and opening up a period of competitive armament and a militaristic environment. Additionally, the war's wake brought about the political re-grouping of Europe on the basis of Franco-German antagonism.

The period prior to the First World War was one of unprecedented economic rivalry and shifting economic strengths. Industrial developments in France, Belgium, Italy, Russia, India, Japan but above all in Germany and America, had put an end to the British capitalist monopoly of the world market that had held sway in the first half of the 19th century.

It was a dangerous mix of rising and declining capitalist powers, emerging and waning imperial forces, strutting the world looking for advantage. As now, the pursuit of profits by finance capital was the chief political dynamic, and the workings of capitalism itself led to war.

The nations of Europe were also competing in their colonial expansion. In the 1880s and 1890s the pace of imperialist competition increased, especially in Africa and the Far East. Those powers possessing no colonies, notably Italy and Germany, thought they should have some.

Colonies were profitable to finance capital. Britain secured control of Egypt

and a powerful colonial empire in southern Africa; France took possession of Tunis in north Africa and Tonkin in east Asia; Italy secured a foothold in Abyssinia; Russia accomplished its conquests in central Asia, pushed into Manchuria and extended control across Siberia to the Pacific with the Trans-Siberian railway; Germany won its first colonies in Africa and in the South Seas; the USA procured the Philippines.

There was a chain of bloody wars and conquests in imperial expectation of economic gain and to safeguard frontiers or exclude rivals from vacant territory. All these colonial developments created new, extra-European antagonisms: between Italy and France in northern Africa, France and Britain in Egypt, Britain and Russia in central Asia, Russia and Japan in eastern Asia, Japan and Britain in China, and the USA and Japan in the Pacific Ocean.

### Rivalries

Imperialist rivalries led to rapid growth of militarisation. By 1897, German military policies underwent radical change moving from Bismarck's strategy of power on land across the continent to challenging for supremacy on the ocean as well. Germany attempted to rival Britain as the world's greatest naval force, a feverish naval race began, with the building of dreadnoughts and battleships on both sides.

Imperial Britain, facing the rise of the new Imperial German High Seas Fleet, committed resources to staying ahead at sea. In 1904, Britain created a North Sea Fleet based at Rosyth on the east coast of Scotland to counter the threat from the large German navy.

Europe divided into rival alliance systems. Often begun as defensive manoeuvring, they became offensive structures escalating the scale of conflict and animosities. Between 1879 and 1902, the German-Austrian and Franco-Russian treaties were made, followed by the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy, the England and France entente, the England and Russia entente, and then Britain allied with Japan. In 1914 alliances dragged nations into war.



The Australian 6th Division marching to the Somme

Crises and flashpoints brought the world to the verge of a general conflict: Morocco, Macedonia, Bosnia, Agadir and Albania. But each time a greater clash was postponed, as the sides were not yet ready with military preparations, though the final conflict was already forming.

### What might have been

The only force that might have prevented the world war – the working classes of the world, particularly Europe – did not do so. In 1907 and 1912 the Second International (of workers' organisations) had declared: "Should war nevertheless break out, it shall be the duty of the social democracy to work for a speedy peace, and to strive with every means in its power to utilise the industrial and political crisis to accomplish the awakening of the people, thus hastening the overthrow of capitalist class rule." But as the German Communist, Rosa Luxemburg, observed in 1915, "The first thunder of Krupp cannons in Belgium welded Germany into a



... that led to it had been



...me.

wonderland of social harmony.”

Across Europe there was a working class retreat into “defence of nation, defence of empire”. International social democracy capitulated to capitalism’s whims and working men killed and destroyed each other in the ‘methodical, organised, gigantic murder’ of world war. The major social democratic parties of Germany, France and Britain rushed to the ‘defence of their fatherlands’ and in patriotic frenzy voted for war credits and clamoured about enemies.

It was left to Lenin and the Bolshevik Party in Russia in October 1917 to take workers out of an imperialist war and recognise its real aims – the seeking of territory and spheres of influence, trade advantage, raw materials, control of trade routes, and political, economic or military domination of vulnerable nations.

The inter-imperialist war happened brought the mass slaughter of an estimated 10 million people plus 20 million wounded. History warns. ■

More from our series on aspects of Marxist thinking

# WAR AND CAPITALISM

**The apologists of capitalism harp on endlessly about the supposed downsides of socialism. Their tongues fall conveniently still when it comes to the glaring defects of the capitalist world. Partisan media commentators never count the cost of living with capitalism. Invariably the destruction and catastrophes associated with the bourgeois system are presented as inexplicable, unavoidable, unfortunate events that we are fated to endure.**

Of the many unacceptable costs of living with capitalism, probably the biggest is its periodic tendency to generate massive military conflicts, orgies of mutual slaughter that originate in the same way. Contradictions and economic conflicts between capitalist blocs gradually escalate, become increasingly antagonistic then eventually erupt into global wars, consuming colossal numbers of lives and obliterating resources.

So far capitalism has spawned two devastating world wars. We should never forget their cost, but equally we should recall what generated them and therefore ensure they are never repeated. The world wars were fearsomely destructive of property and economic production, but over time, and with much sacrifice and effort, economies can be rebuilt and restored. The world wars were also shockingly destructive of life; nothing can restore that precious quality.

Historians estimate the number of military and civilian casualties in the First World War at 37 million people: 10 million military personnel plus 7 million civilian deaths, with a further 20 million wounded. Estimates of fatalities in the Second World War range from 50 to 70 million people, with one source calculating there were over 25 million military and over 37 million civilian deaths – misery that was totally avoidable. These huge losses happened because capitalism was allowed to determine how the world developed, producing debilitating economic and political contradictions among leading powers that could not be confined to peaceful means.

Examination of our contemporary world reveals many disturbing parallels to previous pre-war periods, in particular, the existence of acute differences of economic and political interest between the great powers. The world is increasingly characterised by competing forces contesting trade, resources, minerals, oil, even water.

The past is always a source of instruction to the present. Today it warns us there is a new danger of capitalism sucking workers into another catastrophic world war. The safety of our world is too important to be left in the hands of such a tainted system. The one sure way to avoid the nightmare of a third world war is through workers internationally enforcing their own peaceful outcome on the planet by pursuing socialist agendas of mutual construction and mutual respect.

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# Back to Front – Britain is one nation

**‘A referendum would not only affect the Scots, but Britain as a whole... On such a constitutional issue all should cast a vote...’**

“I DON’T want to be Prime Minister of England, I want to be Prime Minister of the whole United Kingdom,” says David Cameron. And Ed Miliband, who has seemingly joined the coalition on this issue, was correct when he told the Commons: “This is a momentous decision which our children and grandchildren will have to live with if we get it wrong.” Unfortunately, he didn’t have any analysis to explain quite what “wrong” would be or for whom.

At the same time, hoping to appeal to romanticised myth and obscure real history, Alex Salmond wants to hold the referendum in 2014, the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn. But the battle was fought between two feudal overlords, sole possessors of the land! Scotland no more belonged to the people who lived there than did England to the English.

The Act of Union in 1706 merged the parliament of Scotland with that of England and Wales, and Britain became officially one nation. A rapidly growing capitalist economy throughout Britain destroyed feudalism, and the working class emerged.

Britain developed in the heat of the industrial revolution with all its national elements coming together in large-scale manufacture and the growth of major towns across England, Scotland and Wales. It didn’t matter which particular area mined the coal firing the furnaces, which were located throughout the nation.

From this rapid industrial expansion emerged the British working class, with a common interest in opposition to naked capitalist exploitation. It quickly developed a sense of itself. The skills required by industry were working class skills of hand and brain, the same in

Scotland as in England and Wales.

The emergent working class found its collective voice through trade unions. Often local at first, they discovered real strength as they became national. Movements such as Luddism spread throughout Britain.

The British working class has achieved great things: the building of the welfare state after 1945 is a marker of our united strength, in that the ruling class felt the necessity of conceding such to workers who had defeated fascism and demanded a better society. The battle for what was created then began almost immediately, as we see now so acutely.

A referendum on Scotland breaking away from Britain poses a crucial question for the whole British people. Our greater strength lies in unity. All must have a vote on the future of Britain, not just Scotland, with a simple yes/no question. On this, Cameron got it right.

A ‘yes’ vote in a referendum would mean subservience for Scotland. Let Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Italy serve as examples, subsumed by the European superstate. Do Scots really want the euro?

The British working class must not allow itself to be split along false “national” lines. We are a nation – a British nation – who share the same problems and are tied together in common interests. Salmond has been pumped up – by himself, his party and the press. He does not want a referendum because he is afraid his rhetoric will be exposed for what it is. He requires deflating.

Britain needs to re-discover a positive sense of itself, of its actual history as a united working class. We must turn to the real problem: our future as a nation and how to rebuild Britain. ■

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